




PERSEVERING AS WRITERS

○ Issue 2

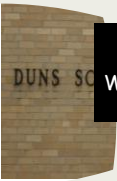
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SHARE YOUR DRAFTS AND
GATHER NEW WRITING IDEAS
ON THE NING:

WNYWSS.NING.COM



OUR NEXT MEETING IS
FEBRUARY 6TH
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

JANUARY NEWSLETTER

WNY Young Writers' *studio*

Persevering As Writers

A Note From Mrs. Stockman

It's that time of year: the skies are grayer more often than they are sunny, our bones are weary from bearing the cold, and our calendars are overflowing with the commitments we've made to our studies, our team-mates, our friends, and our families. It's no wonder that so many of us struggle with writer's block at this time of the year. Many of us are having a hard time simply finding a spare moment to write!

This month, Studio intern and veteran fellow Sarah Hanson shares her thoughts about perseverance and some helpful strategies for practicing it as a writer. Believe me, she speaks from experience as well! When Sarah joined Studio at the end of her eighth grade year, she admitted to me that her largest goal was to simply finish a piece of writing. Over the last two years, she accomplished that and much more, while balancing an impressive variety of

other responsibilities. You may not realize this, but so much writing can be accomplished when we start small and work hard to fit writing "in-between" other activities. I know that most of my writing begins and ends within those small moments after work while I'm waiting for my children to get home or at bedtime, just before I fall asleep. Sometimes, I've even been known to scribble ideas down on a notepad right after I get out of the shower!

One of the best tips I ever received came from one of my favorite writers—Anne Lamott. In her book, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*, she suggests that all writers keep an index card tucked into their pockets or purses or bags, so that ideas and observations can be captured anytime and anywhere. Now, this book was published long before hand held computing devices or even cell phones were a reality—so don't roll your eyes at that suggestion. The point is this: persevering as a writer doesn't demand all of our energies or our time. It just requires us to open our eyes, notice the world around us, and jot our observations down—so we can play with them *later*, when we do have time. Writing is something we can do all day long....even when we are at our busiest. It has less to do with typing and more to do with living. So enjoy all that you are doing this year, and when you have time....scribble about it a bit. These are your stories in waiting....and summer *IS* coming. See you soon!



Remember Summer??

Here's a fun idea that might help keep our writing fingers nimble this winter: visit our studio ning at <http://wnyywss.ning.com>, and peruse all of the pictures we have posted there from last summer.

Choose ONE to use as a prompt for a poem, a journal entry, a memoir....even a paragraph. Bring *whatever* you write to our next session. I'd love to add your work to the Dispositions boxes we began last summer!

SUBMIT YOUR WORK

If you would like to see your work included in the next issue of the WNY Young Writers' Studio newsletter, please submit your piece via email to stockmanangela@gmail.com. We print all forms of writing, but space is limited. Please feel free to bring pieces to Studio for peer review and editing help! The deadline for inclusion in the March newsletter is February 15th!

I'm looking forward to publishing your work right here in our community newsletter!!

Studio Intern Sarah Hanson On Perseverance.....



Perseverance is a key aspect for all writers. There is a point in every writer's career where the idea quitting is tempting; whether it be because of writer's block, lack of ideas, lack of motivation, busy schedules, or because of the fear of failure. The truth is, you can never 'fail' at writing unless you don't put your best effort forwards. Everyone has the ability to write; it is just the effort and imagination that helps speed the process along. I have experienced a lull in writing many times before, and there have always been ways that have helped me get back on track.

There is really no specific way to set aside writing time in your busy life. If you want to write, you'll pick up the pen or laptop and just get to work. Motivation comes from exercise of the imagination. Ideas can come from anything- a funny moment in class, the game that you're playing, the book you're reading, or the movie you just watched. As a writer, you must never be afraid to 'take' an idea to mold it into one of your own. The idea of plagiarism only comes if you take the idea word-for-word, and then put it under your name. Ideas also come from the unexpected, such as spending a day outside or the dream that you just had last night and still remember. A good way to store your ideas is by carrying a small notebook that you can keep on you at all times.

Writer's block is also a tricky little enemy to deal with. This seems to occur most often, though, when you put writing aside for a long period of time, and just happen to want to start the piece right back up again. As a writer myself, I'd estimate that I have a total of five hundred story beginnings in tons of notebooks and sheets of paper in my desk, and five hundred others collecting dust inside of my brain. You must find the perseverance by creating your own techniques to battle this fellow. Looking to websites for guidance, such as <http://www.languageisavirus.com>, or <http://www.webook.com/911writersblock>, may help you to gain some inspiration. You can also ask your friends for some help and listen to their conversations... sometimes your friend's kooky ideas just may be the inspiration you need! You can also try people-watching when you're out in public, looking at a person's expression, interactions with the environment, and personality to create a new character to liven up your story line.

These are just a few of the many ways I have learned to aid you towards achieving perseverance. Learning your own writing type, strong points, and techniques will also help you towards success in the long run. Good luck on your journey to achieving your Writer's Dispositions!

Exploring Perseverance as Readers
The following books and novels feature characters who persevere against all odds!
Recommended by Sarah Hanson

Younger Readers

The Secret School by Avi- In 1925, a fourteen-year-old girl secretly takes over as teacher when her one-room schoolhouse is shut down.

Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman- a little girl learns that she can achieve being anyone she wants to be if she puts her all into her dreams.

Little One Step by Simon James- a tiny duckling realizes that using the theory of taking “one small step at a time” will help him accomplish anything.

Bravo, Persevere! by Robert Spencer- a small passenger plane is determined to prove his worth through a very special flying mission.

Books for Readers Twelve and Older

The Yearling by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings- This is the story of a young boy who strives to provide for his pet fawn and by doing so matures into an adolescent.

Same Difference by Siobhan Vivian- Emily is a talented artist, but is not sure how to control and cultivate her talent until a college art program occurs nearby. However, she must lead herself into success not only in the art world, but in choosing the friends and life she wants to have, too.

Reincarnation by Suzanne Weyn- This is the story of two destined lovers who struggle to remain together through a whirlwind of time periods.

The Color Purple by Alice Walker- A black woman desperate for a better future, struggles to love, respect, and protect herself.**

Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them by *The Freedom Writers*- The true story of how one teacher used diary writing to help a group of “un-teachables” become successful students

**These books may include adult themes and issues

Preparing a Draft for Our February Session!

SEE YOU ON FEBRUARY 6TH!

Our next session will be held on Saturday, February 6th in Room 218 of Duns Scotus Hall!

Last month, we attempted some scheduling changes in order to accommodate some of our members. Unfortunately, these changes only complicated the lives of others! This month, we will return to our original schedule, and we plan to stay there for the rest of this year. Thanks for your patience!

Elementary Students
9am-11am

Middle and High School Students
12pm-2pm

Throughout this year, we've been busy gathering and shaping our writing ideas, conferring with one another, and making revision upon revision to the pieces that we've begun.

This spring, every writer in our Studio will have the opportunity to be published in the first annual edition of the WNY Young Writers' Studio Anthology. All writers will receive personal copies of this work at our open reading and book signing on the first Saturday in June.

In order to meet our deadlines, it's important for each writer to bring a rough draft of the work that they would like to include to our session on February 6th. You may choose to include any piece of writing that you wish, from any genre that you wish. Each writer's work may consume up to five complete pages of text (single-spaced) if necessary, but your pieces may also be substantially shorter as well. I am also very eager to include digital photographs and illustrations in our Anthology as well. If you would like to have any of this work included, please look forward to receiving instructions for how you can send these items to me electronically.

I'm looking forward to watching you persevere through what may feel like the most challenging phases of the writing process: transitioning from drafting to revision to editing to....PUBLISHING!

If you have questions or need my help in anyway, please feel free to email me, call me, or leave me a note on our ning!

---Mrs. Stockman

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